



## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2022-0454; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01124-T]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** The FAA proposes to supersede Airworthiness Directive

(AD) 2019-03-25, which applies to certain Airbus SAS Model A318 series airplanes;

Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model

A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112,

-131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. AD 2019-03-25 requires repetitive

inspections of the center and outer wing box lower stiffeners and panels at a certain

junction on the left- and right-hand sides for any cracking, and repair if necessary.

AD 2019-03-25 also provides an optional modification, which would terminate the

repetitive inspections. Since the FAA issued AD 2019-03-25, it has been determined that,

for certain airplanes, the compliance time for the initial inspection is inadequate and must

be revised. This proposed AD continues to require the actions specified in AD 2019-03-

25 with revised compliance times for certain airplanes and additional actions for certain

airplanes, and expands the applicability, as specified in a European Aviation Safety

Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference. The FAA is

proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For material that will be incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); Internet [www.easa.europa.eu](http://www.easa.europa.eu). You may find this material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0454.

### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0454; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any

comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email Vladimir.Ulyanov@faa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Comments Invited**

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2022-0454; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01124-T” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

**Confidential Business Information**

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is

important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email Vladimir.Ulyanov@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

### **Background**

The FAA issued AD 2019-03-25, Amendment 39-19577 (84 FR 8805, March 12, 2019) (AD 2019-03-25), which applies to certain Airbus SAS Model A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. AD 2019-03-25 requires repetitive special detailed inspections (SDIs) of the center and outer wing box lower stiffeners and panels at a certain junction on the left- and right-hand sides for any cracking, and repair if necessary. AD 2019-03-25 also provides an optional modification, which would terminate the repetitive inspections. The FAA issued AD 2019-03-25 to address the loss of pre-tension in the fasteners, which could affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

### **Actions Since AD 2019-03-25 Was Issued**

Since the FAA issued AD 2019-03-25, it has been determined that, for certain airplanes, the compliance time for the initial inspection is inadequate and must be revised and additional actions are required. Additionally, the applicability is expanded.

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2021-0228, dated October 12, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0228) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS

Model A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -215, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. Model A320-215 airplanes are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability.

EASA AD 2021-0228 superseded EASA AD 2018-0218, dated October 11, 2018; corrected October 26, 2018 (which corresponds to FAA AD 2019-03-25).

This proposed AD was prompted by a report that taperlocks used in the wing-to-fuselage junction at rib 1 were found to be noncompliant with the applicable specification, resulting in a loss of pre-tension in the fasteners; and a determination that, for certain airplanes, the compliance time for the initial inspection is inadequate and must be revised. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the loss of pre-tension in the fasteners, which could affect the structural integrity of the airplane. See the MCAI for additional background information.

### **Explanation of Retained Requirements**

Although this proposed AD does not explicitly restate the requirements of AD 2019-03-25, this proposed AD would retain the requirements of AD 2019-03-25. Those requirements are referenced in EASA AD 2021-0228, which, in turn, is referenced in paragraph (g) of this proposed AD.

### **Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51**

EASA AD 2021-0228 specifies procedures for repetitive internal and external SDIs (ultrasonic inspections) of the center and outer wing box lower stiffeners and panels at the level of rib 1 junction on the left- and right-hand sides for any cracking, and repair if necessary; and additional actions (re-protection of the inspected area at the lower panel at rib1 junction at the left- and right-hand sides) for airplanes on which certain service

information was used. EASA AD 2021-0228 also specifies procedures for an optional modification, which would terminate the repetitive inspections. This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

### **FAA's Determination**

These products have been approved by the aviation authority of another country and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, it has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is issuing this NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop in other products of these same type designs.

### **Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM**

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2021-0228 described previously, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD.

### **Explanation of Required Compliance Information**

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2021-0228 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2021-0228 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2021-0228 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement

refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2021-0228. Service information required by EASA AD 2021-0228 for compliance will be available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0454 after the FAA final rule is published.

### **Costs of Compliance**

The FAA estimates that this proposed AD affects 765 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

#### **Estimated costs for required actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Labor cost</b>	<b>Parts cost</b>	<b>Cost per product</b>	<b>Cost on U.S. operators</b>
Retained actions from 2019-03-25	51 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$4,335	\$0	\$4,335	\$25,860 (516 airplanes)
New additional proposed actions	13 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$1,105	\$0	\$1,105	Up to \$845,325 (Up to 765 airplanes)

The FAA has received no definitive data that would enable the agency to provide cost estimates for the repair specified in this proposed AD.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act**

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to take approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of

information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

### **Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

### **Regulatory Findings**

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and



(3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

#### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

#### **The Proposed Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

#### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

#### **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by:

a. Removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2019-03-25, Amendment 39-19577

(84 FR 8805, March 12, 2019); and

b. Adding the following new AD:

**Airbus SAS:** Docket No. FAA-2022-0454; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01124-T.

#### **(a) Comments Due Date**

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

#### **(b) Affected ADs**

This AD replaces AD 2019-03-25, Amendment 39-19577 (84 FR 8805, March 12, 2019) (AD 2019-03-25).

#### **(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus SAS Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model

A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes; certificated in any category; as identified in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0228, dated October 12, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0228).

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, Wings.

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by a report that taperloks used in the wing-to-fuselage junction at rib 1 were found to be non-compliant with the applicable specification, resulting in a loss of pre-tension in the fasteners; and a determination that, for certain airplanes, the compliance time for the initial inspection is inadequate and must be revised and additional actions are required. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the loss of pre-tension in the fasteners, which could affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Requirements**

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2021-0228.

**(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0228**

(1) Where EASA AD 2021-0228 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2021-0228 specifies to “contact Airbus for approved repair instructions” if any damage (cracking) is found, for this AD, if any cracking is found, the cracking must be repaired before further flight using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA;

or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) The "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2021-0228 does not apply to this AD.

**(i) Additional FAA AD Provisions**

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or responsible Flight Standards Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(2). Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer*: For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) *Required for Compliance (RC)*: For any service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0228 that contains paragraphs that are labeled as RC, the instructions in RC paragraphs, including subparagraphs under an RC paragraph, must be done to comply with this AD; any paragraphs, including subparagraphs under those paragraphs, that are not identified as RC are recommended. The instructions in paragraphs, including subparagraphs under those paragraphs, not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program

without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the instructions identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to instructions identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

**(j) Related Information**

(1) For EASA AD 2021-0228 contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); Internet [www.easa.europa.eu](http://www.easa.europa.eu). You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. This material may be found in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0454.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email [Vladimir.Ulyanov@faa.gov](mailto:Vladimir.Ulyanov@faa.gov).

Issued on April 5, 2022.

Lance T. Gant, Director,  
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.

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